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ABSTRACT

National Humanities Faculty working papers are the result of faculty members' participation in or visits to humanities projects in schools across the country. The papers included in this document are reports to those schools and to the faculty on particular visits. Further documents in this collection, SO 007 915-918, have different emphases--curriculum content, curriculum development, workshop papers, and a source list of humanities materials. In this collection on school visits, Frithjof Bergmann comments on a curriculum in an all-black inner-city high school, where relevance has become boredom and where "making it" is the major criterion for course content. Included are suggestions for usable content that puts the humanities to work. Wallace W. Douglas helps language arts teachers with their program, emphasizing basic skills and personal achievement, by suggesting the incorporation of local culture and visual sensitivities. Fred E. H. Schroeder's observations of a junior high American studies program covers the importance of methods over content, the interdisciplinary nature of teaching, and other teaching and learning concerns. (JH)

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NATIONAL HUMANITIES FACULTY WORKING PAPERS.

[THREE REPORTS ON VISITS TO VARIOUS SCHOOLS.]

BY FRITHJOF BERGMANN AND OTHERS

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NHF WORKING PAPERS

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Frithjof Bergmann, Department of Philosophy, The University of Michigan, wrote this report to the NHF project in Dunbar High School, Baltimore, which was working on an already existing humanities program.

Dunbar is an all-black, inner-city school, but Professor Bergmann's comments on the "relevant" curriculum are valuable in any school situation today. The coordinator of the Dunbar project was Mrs. Jeanne Robinson.

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THE AMERICAN COUNCIL OF LEARNED SOCIETIES, AND THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION

This letter will be an attempt to summarize some of my main impressions and to put the different suggestions and ideas that came from all of us during my visit into a clearer order. I'll start from the most general and work my way down to the specific.

First, then, is the matter of "relevance". This still seems to me very much as we discussed it during one of our planning sessions. Most people seem to think that to be "relevant" can only be an advantage. One assumes that the student is interested in the concerns of his own life, in his immediate situation, and so one moves closer to the student's life in one's teaching. All across the country teachers have moved in this direction, that is, away from things that are distant from the student and toward things that are close to him. One eliminates ancient history and "classical" music and talks about current events that affect the student and rock or soul music. In very general terms this corresponds to what you have done in your program. You concentrate on black history, on the psychology of the inner city, on African or black art, and you show them slides and films that picture their own life and their own city.

But I was soon struck by two observations. For one thing, I was very impressed with the quality of your teaching. All of you not only work hard, but you also have a flair for presentation; you make effective use of many various techniques, including some of the most modern, and you employ effectively your technical equipment, from the electric pianos to the tape recorders. That was my first observation. However, the second fact which I soon noticed was in sharp contrast to this first one. Both from talking to you and from my conversations with your students, it became clear that the students were, when all is said and done, not very interested in the material of your course. This was very startling, precisely because you teach well and because the content was so "relevant". I was sure that your classroom teaching was not at fault, so it had to be something else. What could it be? Here are some of my tentative replies to that question.

I. It is very important to think about "relevance" in a new way. Relevance is not the sweet medicine it seems to be. It is not true that the closer to the student's life one gets the more interested he is bound to be. There is a whole other side to the picture and that is the "fascination of the different and the strange," the "curiosity about the new and distant," which is alive in every child. The situation is more like a teeter-totter: one side goes up and the other comes down. As you move the content closer to the student's life you tend to lose everything that the "new" and the "unknown" have to offer. He is very apt to say, "But this I know already. This has been with me my whole life, and I don't care about it, so why should I study it in school." I of course don't mean that one should turn right around and go back thirty years. No, but I am saying that becoming more relevant is not only a gain; it is also a loss. It makes it not only easier; there are ways in which it makes it harder. The great drawback of the relevant is that the student is apt to feel that it is not new. As the teacher becomes more relevant the student may become more bored.

II. A second fact concerns more directly the particular kind of student that you teach. I got the impression that their world has two divided sides, or two large possibilities. Quite simply: one either "makes it", one "does well", or one does not. Not "making it" means living the rest of one's life as one lives now. And nearly all of them, as far as I could tell, wanted to "make it". This they seemed to have in common, though the ways in which they thought about it were very different. For some it was only a wispy fantasy, words that they said but did not actually believe; to others (to a boy like James) it was like an obsession; they talked of nothing else. Though each in his own and different way, they all had some relation to that possibility, and thought and felt about it. Now this, it seems to me, is for your teaching a fact of great importance.

It means that your students judge everything you teach them in terms of this goal. Of course this is not always entirely conscious, but I wouldn't be surprised if it were quite explicit in not a few. I imagine that they do ask themselves the question "Is this going to help me make it or not?" and that anything that does has more of a chance with them than anything that doesn't. So some of the material you teach has two strikes against it -- no matter <u>how</u> well you perform the individual presentation. It is on the one hand too familiar, and it on the other does not obviously help them with the one thing they expect, with their hope to raise themselves up.

Please do not misunderstand me. I don't say any of this in order to suggest that you should teach them something else. I only say it because I believe it to be crucial that one is very aware of the difficulty that you confront. I am trying to say: this is what you are up against. The suggestions I made during my visit, and the additional ones that I'll make now, are all motivated by these difficulties. They are all intended to respond to them.

If the two difficulties that I have just described really do exist, then the general direction in which you should perhaps move is already clear: briefly, in the direction of PUTTING THE HUMANITIES TO WORK.

More specifically, there are two kinds of "relevance" -- one good and the other bad. Relevance is bad if it starts to mean: stay close to what the students know. Then it eventually comes to mean: "Don't teach!" Good relevance means: teach the students what they want and need to know. And for your students, as far as I can tell, it is important that what they learn can be <u>used</u> -- used in a job and, yes, used to make money -- so that is where one would have to start.

So here are the suggestions: Start the course with a discussion of various jobs. I got the impression that your students have only a very limited idea of the <u>kinds</u> of jobs that actually exist. As both Ronald and Joyner said to me in conversation: "One of their troubles is that they

have no models. They only know janitors and teachers, athletes and entertainers and maybe a doctor." This again seems to me a very crucial fact. Very few of them will actually become doctors or baseball stars. For those jobs many lack the talent. But it is even more important that these are jobs in which the demand for blacks is much less great than it is in other jobs in which there are fewer blacks at the moment. So the tragedy is that they only know about the jobs that are hard to get, while they have never even heard of those that they could reach. This could tie in with the humanities in several ways.

At the beginning one could make it an assignment to find in the newspapers or in some other reading jobs and professions that are so far unknown to them. (A game: who can come to class with an advertisement or a description of a job that no one else in the class has every heard of.) As a next step one might narrow the field to jobs that make use of humanistic knowledge. With every year there are more and more such employments. It's probably fair to say that the whole economy moves in this direction. Jobs that require mechanical skill or calculating are becoming fewer -- machines are gradually taking them over -- and the need for those "who can work with people" is becoming greater. To find out about these jobs would not only increase the motivation of your students (they would realize that the humanities are useful), it would also be a way to interest them in reading. Beyond that it would be a good starting point for discussion of any number of topics in social studies. For example, how does one become a welfare worker? What sort of training is required? What is the everyday experience of someone who does this work? How does the welfare system work? Similarly for other jobs. From the civil service (jobs in the past office) to radio and TV announcer, from psychological counseling to salesman in an art or music store, from working for an advertising agency to decorating display windows in stores, to designing clothes, from receptionist to personnel manager, from being a camp counselor for children to being a choir master of a church.

From this starting point it would be very natural to move into greater depth and substance. How exactly one would do this depends of course a great deal on the students. If some have expressed an interest in, for example, counseling at summer camps then one could teach them the kind of music and the kind of art work that they would need for that job. Naturally, one wouldn't want to stop there, but it would be a start and, as all four of you were saying in different ways, with many of your students that is just the problem. (As Joyner put it once: "Many reached their saturation point ten years ago, when they were eight, and they have not moved since.")

One could go further by writing for the application forms to some of these jobs which have been discussed. This would make the whole thing more "real" and it is therefore almost essential. These forms could be the basis of several weeks' work. For instance, one could ask the students to write

small plays on how they imagine an interview. This would exercise their imagination, but it might also be invaluable for real life. Two students could act out one of these interviews for the rest of the class. Some of the questions on the application forms call for short essays. They could write those. And so forth.

Again, once one has made this start it's easy to introduce the more usual content. One could read scenes from novels in which people apply for jobs, or in which jobs are described. (Ellison's Invisible Man, Baldwin, but also Sinclair Lewis, Steinbeck, Hemingway, and even Dickens) And beyond that there are of course novels and plays in which the main character may have the job in which some students have expressed an interest -- so one could read and discuss these, and so forth.

To illustrate still further: when I was visiting with you, you were just planning a section on Baltimore. This would fit in perfectly. One could teach this city from the job perspective. What industries are there? What kinds of jobs do they offer? What else do people in Baltimore do? How does this link up with the history of the city and with the rest of the country? Which of these jobs would interest you? Why not learn right in this class some of what you would need for this job?

Now this suggestion -- of teaching the humanities in their relationship to actual jobs -- links up with some of the concerns that we discussed during my visit. We thought that it would be good to have some kind of "project" which the whole class, or a part of it, could undertake, something they could do together, that would lead to a final product and give the class a sense of purpose. We had several ideas on this: one was to produce a kind of multimedia show (to be put on, for example, for an assembly), in which skits written by your class could be combined with some of their poems, in which perhaps they would also sing songs they themselves had composed, and in which there would also be slides and tape recordings made by the class. Another idea was to make a movie about the class itself, a film in which the students would describe their own lives, made by the students themselves. The students with an orientation toward craftsmanship could work on the technical aspects, and the more artistically inclined could work on the script and the soundtrack, and the whole class together could decide what should go into the film and what not.

Our reasons for these projects had to do not only with the motivation of the students, but also with the fact that you badly need "visibility" inside the whole school, which such a project would give you. In addition to that, right now you plan from one class meeting to the next, which involves an incredible amount of work, while a larger project would provide you with continuity and would cut down the time spent on discussions of "what to do next".

A project of this general kind could be integrated with the exploration of jobs through the humanities in several ways: For example, one could turn the search for a particular job into a skit, either together with slides

or with films. One could make slides that describe the entire process from the reading of the first newspaper advertisement to pictures of what the job actually involves, which could be made by the students themselves. Then one could put on a short scene in which the student interviews for a job and follow it with further scenes dealing with some of the things that happen in this kind of work. Again the scenes could be written by the students themselves. Alternatively, one could develop a show around not just one kind of job, but all the different jobs that the whole class explored. This might be of immense interest and value for the rest of the school. (In more detail: one could do something on working as a practical nurse in a hospital. A few students could interview several nurses and a tape of those interviews could be played. There could be slides of the outside and inside of hospitals. One could bring in pieces from the countless poems, novels, and plays that deal with being sick and hospital life. For example, Chekov, the Russian novelist, has a wonderful story called Ward Six, but one might even use the Imaginary Invalid by Moliere, or Solzhenitsyn's Cancer Ward. And one could do the same thing with music and anything from Chuck Berry's song "Dr. Dr., Mr. M.D." to Mozart's Requiem to a choral by Bach. Art, too, could be used in a similar way.)

I have a feeling that this is more than enough for today. Except for one last thing: We talked about the fact that the word "humanities" gets in the way. (I remember the one student who asked me in the hall who I was and what I was doing. When I answered that I worked with the humanities, he wanted to know: What is that? A club?) Maybe you could call your course: CONNECTIONS: Study in the Humanities.

Frithjof Bergmann

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NHF WORKING PAPERS

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Wright Junior High School, with Vivian Collier as its coordinator, set itself the tasks of giving its students a sense of success rather than apathy, of opening to them new areas of exploration, and of helping them master certain basic skills necessary for achieving that success and enjoying those new interests. Begun with a core group of language arts teachers, the program now includes such other studies as art and music.

Wallace W. Douglas, Department of English, Northwestern University, wrote this report to the school in the spring of the year. Therefore, it describes something of what had already been accomplished as it makes suggestions for the future.

SO 007 914

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As you know, during the last ten or twelve years I've been working quite a bit with and for teachers. That work has made me look at "reform" and "innovation" in the schools in a rather special, perhaps eccentric, way. I got involved in "change" back in the days when all sorts of "subject-matter specialists" were preparing "teacher-proof materials"; indeed I did some stuff of that sort myself. But I soon began to feel that all that New Grammar, New Rhetoric, New Literature wasn't coming even close to touching the central problem.

It was the attitudes of teachers that ought to be concerning us, I thought; specifically their attitudes toward, their conceptions of, themselves as teachers. At the time everyone was going around wondering how the results of research in the "subject-matter disciplines" and in techniques and mechanisms for teaching could be "disseminated" or got into the hands of teachers. The real question, I began to think, was rather how teachers could come to free their minds and spirits--their hands, as it were--and learn to value themselves in their roles as teachers, so that they could feel themselves to be independent agents--act-ers--not just transmission mechanisms, like the classroom hardware that was then being touted as a means of individualizing instruction.

Something more than fifty years ago, W. S. Learned and W. C. Bagley permitted themselves the following rather sardonic comment on teacher training in the United States: "A school system with us is an elaborate hierarchical device that undertakes through successive gradations of text-book makers, superintendents, principals, and supervisors to isolate and prepare each modicum of knowledge and skill so that it may safely be entrusted to the humble teacher at the bottom, who is drilled for a few weeks only, if at all, in directions for administering it ultimately to the child" (The Professional Preparation of Teachers for American Public Schools [New York: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Bulletin No. 14, 1920], p. 8).

On the whole, that seemed to me at the time, as it still does, a pretty good description of the spirit that animated much of the curriculum reform movement of the fifties and sixties. It is a spirit that I am still afraid of finding when I go into a school interested in change. I am, therefore, pleased to be able to say that your group seems well on the way to developing the kind of professional and intellectual independence that I have in mind for the object of reform. It is terribly important, it seems to me, that this was your project, and that you planned it having in mind the specific social needs of the children who attend Wright. You have furthermore made yourselves into a working group--five teachers (two not even in language arts) who are planning together on ways and means of meeting the needs and interests (not all of them school-related) of particular children. What you are

doing is quite different from the operations of an ordinary curriculum committee, which most often will meet during a summer or after school hours, to shuffle around the bits and pieces of knowledge (cf. Learned and Bagley above)--"competencies" and "concepts," as they are called in the trade--that are found in study guides and textbooks.

The common understanding that you have developed--of yourselves, your subjects, and the children--seems to me very noteworthy indeed. I am not sure you value this professional growth quite so highly as I do, or the outcome it is having in your teaching. I detected among you an interesting tendency to accept and defend the "basic skills" that were given to teachers some generations ago, by those above them in the hierarchy of the schools, to transmit to children. But we learn by doing, as the old slogan goes. So I hope very much that, after the expiration of the NHF project, some means will be found to support your group in its working together. Would it not be splendid if you could become a model for teacher development in the metropolitan district?

I hope the foregoing will not make you think that I am undervaluing the learning/teaching objectives that you set forth in your proposal. Of course not. The unity or at least relatedness of all the languages or media of expression is by now a generally accepted principle, though perhaps not yet one on which much classroom practice is based. That principle is at least implicit in the very composition of your group. In conversation I gathered that both Mrs. Callahan and Mrs. Philbin understand that artwork and works of art are not only containers of funded value, but also means of expression and occasions of response. They are reasons for talk and writing.

It would be good, therefore, if the school could be set up in such a way as to allow your pupils to move around fairly freely among the language, music, and art rooms. Ideally, of course, one would like to get away from the separation by rooms, which must inevitably affect the way the children view art, music, and language. At the least, the organization by rooms makes the chidren think of subjects rather than experience. But rooms you have, and must make do with them. I think more art stuff might be brought into the language rooms, made a part of them. I don't mean just as decoration or display, but as an essential means into language activity. In other words, if articulateness and fluency are valid objectives in the language arts, then we must always be on the lookout for means that will unblock; and I take it that works of art and working in artistic media have great power to do that. That's one of the important reasons for bringing art and language into a working connection.

There is still another value to art in the language class: that is the results it has in the imaginative, affective experience of children. In the circumstances of Wright, as I understand them, this seems to me very important indeed. I take it that the children who attend Wright are largely from lower-middle-class or working-class families. If the school building itself is any evidence, there can

never (even before bussing, I mean) have been much interest in sensuous experience of any sort, let alone such as can be derived from "the finest in literature, art and music" (your proposal, General Objectives for Humanities, Item IV-B). So of course it is vital to immerse the children in as rich a sensuous environment as possible, to prime their imaginations and feelings, as it were. It is also necessary, however, to allow their imaginations some expression, and that not simply in art or musical composition. Stories like Arlie Travis' about Moloch and Melody Pierce's about the legless mailman killed in the insane asylum are very important to the educational experience, the total growth of children. They should not find themselves confined to more or less expository pieces.

For example, think of the feeling that Arlie expressed in his poem on poems. He wrote it, you know, while I was doing blackboard composition with the class, having them supply material to complete the rather silly formula "Nobody writes poems about _____." The children thought of things like "mustard" and "feet" to fill the blank. It was all good fun, and I dare say maybe divested "poetry" of a little of its exotic quality. At least the children saw (perhaps learned) that a poem doesn't have to have rhyme. Meanwhile, of course, there was Arlie in the back of the room, pretty much totally absorbed in writing <u>his</u> poem. (An example of individualized learning?) Fortunately I didn't notice him; Heaven knows how I might have tried to help his writing if I had. As a matter of fact it was Miss Washington who called him to my attention. I still didn't know what was up, only that, for some reason, she wanted me to recognize Arlie. So I asked what he had been doing. He told me, and I went and got the poem and read it to the class. What did I say then? I hope it wasn't much.

Arlie deserves his privacy. So I won't try to interpret the poem. We can remember, though, that he later wrote two more poems <u>for me</u>, and a letter. I guess we can figure out from that something of what Arlie accomplished on that warm February afternoon.

Poems

Nobody makes poems about poems,
People are always making poems.
But don't you think that a poem
Can be lonley not having a
Poem about it self.

People listen to poems,
But don't write poems about poems.
People write poems,
But not poems about poems.

Poems can be lonley like everything.
You can be lonley so why can't
A poem be lonley to.
Everything can be lonley,
Poems can't write about them self,
So they depend on someone else to write,
about them.

I hope that he (and of course other children, too) can find more opportunities for expressive writing, can have more experiences that will arouse his composing impulse.

I note that you speak of "the finest in literature" as providing one of the kinds of experience you should be making available to children, or opening up before them. I have a feeling, however, that you may be letting those reading scores force you to narrow the range and quality of the literary works you bring into the classroom. I am not, by the way, worried lest the children miss the value said to be carried by the works in the central school canon. What I am anxious about is rather that the children be sure to hear as many varieties and styles of language, thought, and feeling as possible. Some of your new friends at Fisk and Tennessee State may help you find works that are a little more current, a little livelier, and perhaps of somewhat better quality than those that get into the typical school anthology.

I think, by the way, that it would be not at all a bad idea to let the students see you with new books of your own, books that can be read to them but not textbooks, or at least not obviously textbooks. They need to learn that reading is not just something they are forced to do in school. They need to learn that you read, too, and read books that they can share in. Of course schooling can never be a natural experience for children. But the least we can do is try to bring in as much that is natural as possible.

The special conditions at Wright suggest to me some need to broaden your conception of culture so as to include material from the local folk culture, if any has been able to survive. The visit of the Fisk puppeteers and singers will be a help, I should think, though how close either organization is to local culture may well be problematic. Are the local historical societies in touch with the popular past? Generally historical societies aren't but the question should be taken up. Do you know of any societies or individuals interested in the preservation of Middle Tennessee folk arts? I'll bet there are people on the Fisk or Tennessee State faculties who know about such matters. Who are your local historians? Do the children themselves have any connection with the countryside? Is there a countryside to have connections with? Do the children know anything about their forbears? Have they family albums, Bibles, other sorts of records? What do their parents do? What are the legends, the lore of the trades and occupations of their parents? Samuel Allen and Nikki Giovanni are both graduates of Fisk. Can't their poems--some anyway--be used? A couple of years ago another poet--Sharon Scott--was a freshman at Fisk. She just might still be there. Who else in Nashville is writing poems or stories these days?

I make these suggestions as a kind of response to or extension of the overall humanistic feeling in your "General Objectives." "Failure in school," you say, "is the first step in the development of a pattern for failure in life." That is true, of course, But as Bruner has said, children acquire a sense of their failure, a feeling of their alienation long before they step into a school. They acquire

it in and from their families; and the school, as a transmitter of predominantly middle-class knowledge and values, merely confirms and strengthens what already exists. Probably, as Sir Alec Clegg has reminded us, no one of us who teaches can ever feel the deep and pervading alienation that is felt by many, perhaps most, school children. For either we come from families to whom the school culture is familiar or at least something to be sought and acquired; or we ourselves have somehow managed to acquire the values and small competencies of which the school culture is constituted. All we can do is acknowledge this reality. That, and of course try to make school a somewhat less alien place. That is why I suggest you think of using local material, preferably material drawn from the experience of the children and their families. We need to help children of the sort who attend Wright feel that their experiences and cultures are valuable too, that the school recognizes them.

In sum, the humanities project at Wright seems to me to have been well conceived and to be proceeding in ways and toward objectives that will have a beneficial influence on the school as a whole. For it to achieve its optimum influence, of course, there must be direct and active support. I trust that that will be forthcoming. I trust too that the extraschool contacts with faculty at the local universities can be continued and broadened. That in itself would provide some of the support that the teachers in the project are going to need.

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NHF WORKING PAPERS

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Disseminating information within a school about the working out of a new program and providing a record for the future can all too easily be neglected in the crush of day-to-day duties. Arlington Junior High School has solved the problem by using a recorder, a sample of whose reports makes up this Working Paper. Not only may other schools find it helpful as a model; they may also benefit from the suggestions made by Fred E. H. Schroeder during the visit reported.

Jan C. Mills was the recorder and Elaine C. Lipschutz the coordinator at Arlington Junior High School, Poughkeepsie, New York.

Background

Dr. Schroeder is associate professor of English at the University of Minnesota, Duluth, and author of the first book to be endorsed by the National Humanities Faculty: Joining the Human Race: How to Teach the Humanities, which was published last year. He has been a writer, lecturer, and journeyman humanist for the National Humanities Series and for the Faculty since 1970. He has taught on the elementary and secondary levels as well as in college and has published numerous articles on American writers, poets, artists, and on educational methods. His interests are wide-ranging and offer a tremendous wealth of material for the humanities teacher, particularly in the area of American Studies, in which he earned his doctorate.

Introduction

Dr. Schroeder's visit was of particular interest to the seventh and eighth grade humanities teams who work with American Studies material. He audited John Kroll and Lon Fishman's seventh grade classes as well as Margo Marconnette and John Markett's classes and saw both teams separately for wide-ranging discussions on what they are doing and how it can be improved.

He addressed teachers from Arlington Junior High as well as a group from LaGrange Junior and sixth grade teachers from Raymond Avenue, West Road, Titusville, and Overlook one afternoon on the "Uses and Abuses of the Interdisciplinary Method." On Tuesday evening, he spoke to parents of those students involved in the humanities program on "Joining the Human Race." Approximately sixty parents attended. He also met twice with all the teachers in the project, hearing their problems, making suggestions, and answering questions on what could be done to further advance their goals. His suggestions were usually concrete examples of what he had tried himself, rather than theoretical ideas, and he explained what had worked successfully as well as those methods which did not work out. On the latter, he analyzed the reasons why they had not worked, which was as helpful as learning about successful innovations.

The following are capsules of many of the ideas he expressed during his three days at the school.

Teaching Methods

In humanities teaching, the method is often more important than the content. To awaken students to certain points of the study involved, a great variety of activities can be engaged--field trips, slides and films, arts and crafts, listening, writing, reading, plays, etc. However, the teacher should ask himself, "Why am I using this approach?" before he begins. Knowing that the students like it is not a good enough reason. The approach used must be a good way to make something clear, not something which will simply be fun for the students. It can be both.

Gimmicks used must also be carefully thought out; i.e., if a scare is to be used so that the student believes the scare is real, one must consider that this could backfire if a particular student cannot handle the situation and may be upset unnecessarily. Games can be well used to enhance learning, particularly in the case of such necessary skills as grammar, spelling, or historical dates, which are often tiresome. For example, to learn the location of states, countries, etc., the old-fashioned method of blank maps where the student must fill in the names of the areas is still more like a game and can be fun. Teachers should be aware, however, that some educational role-playing or performance games when mastered may become idle play. The "ghetto" board game, for instance, loses its social impact after a few rounds.

One method Dr. Schroeder had used successfully to teach local history, architecture, etc., was a variant of Bingo. The large Bingo squares had pictures of various artifacts, buildings, and tools relating to the history of the locale. Each student covered the square once he had seen or found what was in the picture in his own area. It was a game that increased observation and attention to the historical value of the student's home area and challenged his perception of what was around him.

Dr. Schroeder made it clear that research skills, dates, etc. must be attached to the humanities courses because students need "a few hooks to hang things on." Frequently, writing may be better than reading; rather than having a student read a biography, he has had him write the biography of a relative. In their research and personal narratives, the students had gained greater family appreciation and been given a sense of place.

Subject Matter for Adolescents

Meeting with all the humanities teachers, Dr. Schroeder noted that one commonly used theme in the program was that of war and conflict. A discussion followed on just how much of this an adolescent can relate to, particularly at a difficult period in his personal growth. Can consistent use of negative topics be the best route to follow? He admitted that in recent history, since a new view of war as an effective method of solving differences is passe, the war theme is one way of showing the uselessness of violence. However, he feels he may be an optimist, but, in his own teaching, tends to work on affirmatives. He said the real question for young people is "What do you want to be?" not "What do you want the world to be?" The latter question is or will be the result of the former.

Dr. Schroeder showed how many teachers not in the humanities program cross disciplines whether they realize it or not. The social studies teacher who asks a student what he sees in a picture in the history book is going into art history. There are some subjects that can best be learned by way of more than one discipline, e.g., rock music (which can be approached via music, social commentary, poetry). Certain subjects, like the hard sciences, are not so immediately suited for the interdisciplinary method and may require major curricular revisions to achieve it. The converse is even more true: it is easier for most teachers to integrate popular music into their disciplines than it is to integrate inorganic chemistry.

He explained how he will soon be teaching a humanities course to students in the medical field since the university has come to realize its value for future country doctors. Subjects like medicine and biology have for years been "boxed" alone, and it is only recently that we have been made aware that keeping things in a narrow discipline is a mistake, that what is done in one field has side effects in others (e.g., ecology and biochemistry). This trend of incorporating humanities work in fields such as medicine, engineering, and business is not just a revolt against narrow specialization. In the health field, it is being recognized that we need humanistic physicians rather than more specialists.

He used as a classic example of interdisciplinary material Henry Nash Smith's book, The Virgin Land, which uses political history, popular culture, literary history, legends, sociology, etc. to show the image of the West. By using a variety of sources of that era, he also gives the image those people had of themselves. Dr. Schroeder feels no history is complete without that image, and it gives the "texture of everyday" to the history which makes it more real to the student.

Chronology of Subject Matter

In regard to methods and the humanities program, it is always a temptation to leave the conventional year-long chronological sequence out. Chronology can be incorporated, however, into most themes and may be necessary to provide for the students a framework or time sequence for events. If a period of history is examined, for example, through three different themes--politically, concept of God, artistic contributions--each of these themes can be given in chronological order. At the end, the student has gone over the same period chronologically three times. The English teacher will run parallel in time to the history being taught, and whenever the two classes are combined, they will all still be at the same chronological point. This gives a "sense of flow" to what is being learned, instead of spotty, disjointed material which will confuse and which may also put the senior high teacher in a difficult position, when traditional methods are required for the comprehensive exam in the eleventh grade, where chronology is king.

How Much Should the Student Know?

Frequently, students and parents wonder just exactly what it is they have learned in the humanities program. Traditional subjects are easy to label and define. However, it is becoming obvious that although a student may not be able to clearly define what he has learned, he still does well on tests when he must apply his knowledge.

Dr. Schroeder believes definitions are not as important as knowing and applying the knowledge. Humanities teaching is not as easily defined by a simple label because the conventional structure is not there. The student does not have to know or explain to others what he has been learning as long as he is now able to cope with the material. Pat answers aren't necessary, although it is often hard for students and teachers alike to adjust to what is essentially "open-ended," which is what humanities learning (and life) is.

Humanities teachers should, though, think in terms of weeks and terms and put a broad label or theme to the work according to each part of an overall annual theme. This will also prevent the usual long, drawn-out explanations which are common to humanities teachers when they are asked what it is they are teaching.

Research Methods for Students

Another skill which must not be neglected in humanities is that of knowing how to use the library and finding resource materials. Junior high students are capable of learning the basics of footnoting and bibliography. Dr. Schroeder had used funny book titles in scrambled up footnotes to drill classes in the proper form. In the form of a game, whereby they had to unscramble the footnote, they learned the technique in an enjoyable way. Other assignments should follow that put these skills to good use.

Field Trips

Dr. Schroeder noted that this area along the Hudson is filled with a wealth of historical value that can be easily applied to the teaching of American Studies, particularly in local architecture. If teaching precedes the trips taken, he encouraged use of local possibilities such as Washington Irving's Sunnyside, Boscobel, Smith's Clove village, and walks near the school for viewing of architecture of buildings and churches. Smaller groups are preferable. He also encouraged creation of "mini-museums" where artifacts and tools of various eras could be placed into interpretive contexts by the students.

Physical Environment

Dr. Schroeder was extremely happy with the teaching he audited at the school, but felt that an unnecessary strain was put on the teacher, particularly in the seventh grade rooms, because of very poor acoustics. This forced continuous repeats of student answers and, as in the library, increases the discipline problem because of shuffling feet, scraping chairs, etc. The rubber tiling of floors and acoustical ceilings of the eighth grade rooms eliminated all that, and each student can be heard distinctly.

In the library, he believes students would act more professionally if carpeting deadened noise, making it a quiet place to begin with. Indoor-outdoor carpeting for a library of that size would be inexpensive and cause tremendous improvement in the correct use of the library. Dr. Schroeder added that there was irony in the fact that the local IBM computers are housed in much better rooms, acoustically and climatically, than are the children of the IBM executives and employees.

Conclusions

Dr. Schroeder was obviously pleased with the attitudes and teaching habits of the humanities teachers and felt that they were people with a great deal of professionalism. He felt the immediate needs at the Junior High revolved around better environmental adjuncts to the program and was adamant about the need for a Humanities Lab or studio in the building, which could be used for humanities activities and group work.

He also felt that changes were needed to help the acoustical problems in the seventh grade rooms and in the library and that they could be accomplished quite cheaply.

Additional books suitably related to drama, essays, and literature in general are required, although he is aware that it is difficult at present to find materials dealing with a middle-class, small-town milieu.

He felt the humanities teachers had heavy work loads but that much of this was the result of the teachers' personal concern over the students' program and that was a joy to see.